

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3786

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BELIZE 641

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR BH

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS IN BELIZE

REF: BELIZE 581

1. BELIZE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WHICH ENDS TODAY HAS BEEN NOTABLE MORE FOR RICHNESS OF INVECTIVE THAN FOR MEANINGFUL CONTENT; BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE, AND NONE IS EXPECTED DURING POLLING TOMORROW.

2. INDIVIDUAL CONTESTS OF INTEREST. ABSENCE OF POLLS OR OTHER HARD EVIDENCE MAKES PREDICTION LITTLE BETTER THAN GUESSWORK, BUT FOLLOWING IS ROUGH CONSENSUS OF CONGEN'S SOURCES:

A. IN COLLETT DIVISION, UDP CANDIDATE KENNETH TILLET, POPULAR LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, IS REPORTED DOING WELL IN HIS BID TO UNSEAT HARRY COURTENAY, ATTORNEY GENERAL, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS AND SPECIAL ADVISER TO PREMIER PRICE ON DISPUTE WITH GUATEMALA. PUP HAS ALLEGED TILLET INELIGIBLE TO RUN BECAUSE HE WAS IN U.S. FOR PART OF THREE-YEAR PERIOD PRIOR TO ELECTION DURING WHICH BELIZEAN ELECTORAL LAW SPECIFIES CANDIDATE MUST HAVE RESIDED IN BELIZE. EARLIER IN CAMPAIGN A PUP

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REPRESENTATIVE ASKED CONGEN TO CORROBORATE THIS CHARGE FROM

OUR VISA FILES, BUT HE WAS TOLD OUR FILES WOULD NOT HAVE THIS RECORD AND THAT WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO OBTAIN VERIFICATION OF TILLET'S ALLEGED RESIDENCE IN U.S. BEFORE ELECTIONS. BELIZE TIMES SUBSEQUENTLY CARRIED SPEECH BY COURTENAY, COMPLAINING THAT CONGEN HAD REFUSED TO COOPERATE. FYI. DRAFT BIO REPORT WHICH HAS SINCE TURNED UP IN CONGEN'S FILES INDICATES TILLET DID RESIDE IN U.S. AS ALLEGED. COMMENT: IF TILLET WINS, LEGALITY OF HIS CANDIDACY WILL BE CHALLENGED AND CONGEN MAY AGAIN BE ASKED TO VERIFY DATES AND DURATION OF HIS STAY IN U.S.

B. IN CAYO NORTH DIVISION, CONTEST BETWEEN UDP CANDIDATE JOE ANDREWS, MAYOR OF BENQUE VIEJO AND ASSAD SHOMAN, AN AVOWED MARXIST REPRESENTING INFLUENTIAL FAR-LEFT ELEMENT IN PUP, IS CONSIDERED A TOSS-UP. SHOMAN'S STANDING WITH PREMIER IS SUCH THAT EVEN IF HE LOSES HE WILL PROBABLY BE GIVEN AN APPOINTMENT TO THE SENATE AND A KEY CABINET POST.

C. IN BELIZE RURAL SOUTH (GERRYMANDERED TO INCLUDE NORTHERN CAYS) HARRY LAWRENCE, A LEADER IN LIBERAL WING OF UDP, IS GIVING MINISTER LOUIS SYLVESTRE A SURPRISINGLY STRONG CHALLENGE.

D. IN FORT GEORGE, DEAN LINDO LEADER OF PDM WING OF UDP IS GIVEN A GOOD CHANCE TO DEFEAT PUP CANDIDATE SAID MUSA FOR SEAT VACATED BY MINISTER SANDY HUNTER.

E. IN TOLEDO SOUTH, UDP CANDIDATE CHARLES WAGNER COULD BEAT PUP CANDIDATE ALEJANDRO VERNON, MAYOR OF PUNTA GORDA.

F. IN COROZAL BOTH CUF CANDIDATES GIVEN A FIFTY-FIFTY CHANCE OF BEATING PUP CANDIDATES.

G. PUP CANDIDATES GENERALLY FAVORED TO TAKE REMAINING TEN SEATS. (THIS ASSUMES RE-ELECTION OF OPPOSITION LEADER PHILLIP GOLDSON, UDP.)

3. CAMPAIGN FINANCING. CONGEN HAS HEARD REPORTS THAT PUP HAS AT ITS DISPOSAL AN UNUSUALLY LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY. ONE INFORMANT TOLD US MINISTER ROGERS HAS MADE EXTRAVAGANT PROMISES, WHICH SOURCE THOUGHT HE WOULD BE UNABLE TO KEEP, TO A WEALTHY ITALO AMERICAN IN NEW ORLEANS, PROBABLY REFERRING TO MAFIA FIGURE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CARLOS MARCELLO. BULK OF UDP FUNDS SAID TO BE COMING FROM FREEDOM COMMITTEE IN NEW YORK.

4. ISSUES. TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT, CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN ONE OF PERSONALITIES. UDP HAS ALSO EMPHASIZED CORRUPTION, MINISTERIAL INCOMPETENCE, FAILURE OF PUP TO MAKE GOOD PROMISES OF 1969 CAMPAIGN. PUP HAS DONE THE BEST IT COULD WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S RECORD, GARNISHED FREELY WITH NEW PROMISES.

5. DISPUTE WITH GUATEMALA. THIS HAS NOT BEEN A PRINCIPAL ISSUE. PUP PLATFORM, ALTHOUGH REFERRED TO AS THE INDEPENDENCE MANIFESTO, IS VAGUE AS TO HOW INDEPENDENCE IS TO BE ACHIEVED, BUT, IN OPINION OF GOVERNOR POSNETT, CLEAR ENOUGH IN OUTLINING PARTY GOALS TO CONSTITUTE BASIS FOR LATER CLAIM BY PRICE THAT HE HAS A POPULAR MANDATE TO BID FOR INDEPENDENCE IF HE LATER DECIDES TO MAKE SUCH A BID. HOWEVER, NO ONE WE HAVE TALKED TO EXPECTS HIM TO MAKE SUCH A MOVE PRIOR TO RESOLUTION OF GUATEMALA PROBLEM, REGARDLESS OF HOW THE ELECTIONS TURN OUT.

6. COMMENT: AMONG THOSE PUP CANDIDATES FACING THE MOST SERIOUS OPPOSITION CHALLENGE ARE THOSE CLOSEST TO PRICE, ESPECIALLY SHOMAN AND COURTENAY. SAID MUSA IS CLOSE TO SHOMAN AND IS SUFFICIENTLY ABLE TO BECOME AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE IF HE WINS. THEIR DEFEAT WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION SOME OF PRICE'S RECENT LEFTWARD TENDING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES. CONVERSELY, THEIR VICTORY WOULD ADD IMPETUS TO THE SOCIALIZING TREND ALREADY DISCERNIBLE. SHOMAN ESPECIALLY WILL BEAR WATCHING IF HE WINS. GAWF

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